

Application No.: 09/517,579
Amendment Dated: July 31, 2003
Reply to Office Action of: May 1, 2003

REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Nguyen for indicating that the subject matter at page 7, lines 23-25 does not appear to be taught by the prior art of record. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the independent Claims 5, 12 and 20 to include that the voltage is applied to the element in a dry atmosphere having a dew point of not more than -20°C. None of the cited references discloses or suggests this limitation.

Therefore, the rejection of Claims 2-5, 7-9, 11-17 and 19-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto et al (U.S. 4,725,927) in view of Wei et al (U.S. 6,152,970); the rejection of Claims 3, 12-15, 17, 19 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto et al in view of Wei et al, and further in view of Tsushima Manabu (JP10-041199); the rejection of Claims 8 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto et al in view of Wei et al, and further in view of Grigortchak et al (U.S. 5,351,164); and the rejection of Claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto et al in view of Wei et al and Tsushima, and further in view of Grigortchak are believed to be unsustainable as the present invention is neither anticipated nor obvious and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.


The objection to Claims 2-5, 7-9, 11-17 and 19-26 is obviated by the amendment of Claims 5, 12 and 20.

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Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance and early notice of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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